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PLANS FLOP FOR KINDER ISRAELI LOBBY

Congressmen, Powerful Politicians Too Scared to Challenge Influence of Israel's Preeminent Lobby Group



It sounded good on paper, but maybe it was just a public relations ploy. When plans were announced for a more moderate Israeli lobby, America-firsters were ecstatic. And so were many in Congress. But once Israel condemned the concept, lawmakers who had pledged support for the new lobby abandoned it. Nearly everyone boycotted the meeting except President Barack Obama, who sent his national security advisor to speak.

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Plans Flop for Moderate Pro-Israel Lobby

By Michael Collins Piper



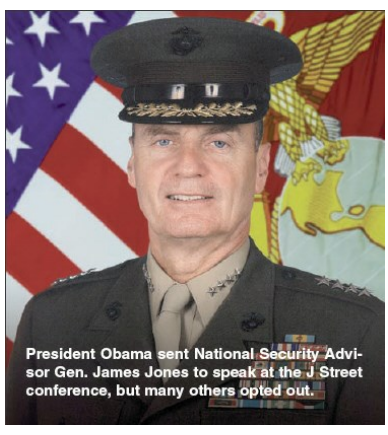
ALTHOUGH MUCH IS OFTEN MADE in the mainstream press about the significant pro-Obama vote by American Jews during the last election, *The New York Times* dropped a bombshell on October 31 when it revealed that Obama's favorable rating in Israel dropped to about 4 percent this past fall according to a poll for *The Jerusalem Post*.

This news reflects the fact that despite apparent cosmetic differences between political factions in Israel and American Jews, hard-liners in Israel (and in the American lobby for Israel) reflect popular opinion within their respective constituencies.

Another evidence of this is the fact that what appeared to be an ambitious effort to launch a "moderate" pro-Israel lobby to counter the heavy-handed clout of the hard-line pro-Israel lobby known as AIPAC appears to have gone belly-up.

As a consequence, AIPAC—which is short for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee—continues to reign supreme in official Washington.

The newly established pro-Israel organization known as J Street recently held its first national conference in Washington but the meeting—from a public relations standpoint—was a bust. Not only did Israel's ambassador to the U.S. boycott the conference (suggesting rather pointedly that the government of Israel doesn't particularly care for "moderate" American Jewish organizations) but also a bevy of U.S. senators and members of the House of Representativeswho had initially agreed to attend —or otherwise lend their public support for the conference—ultimately decided it would not be in their best interests to do so. That is, AIPAC and Israel wouldn't approve.



President Obama sent National Security Advisor Gen. James Jones to speak at the J Street conference, but many others opted out.

In addition, the actual meeting itself received sparse coverage in the mainstream press which otherwise likes to report on matters relating to gatherings of pro-Israel Americans. Clearly this group of pro-Israel Americans —who have something critical to say, on occasion, about Israel—was not seen as worthy of significant press coverage.

J Street was set in motion as an ostensible "alternative" to AIPAC, emphasizing that J Street and its supporters were most definitely lovers and supporters of Israel but that, unlike AIPAC, they would feel free to criticize Israel as necessary.

And while some critics of Israel—such as the ardently pro-Arab (and occasionally quite blatantly anti-Jewish) magazine, *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*—enthusiastically babbled on about the creation of J Street, hyping its existence as "proof " that "not all American Jews support Israel unconditionally"—J Street has had little influence inWashington or in affecting political opinion within the American Jewish community. J Street largely exists in the rhetoric of its own press releases. And the big flop of its first national conference drove that point home most painfully.

The fact that President Obama did dispatch his national security advisor, General James Jones, to speak at the conference was no real surprise. There have been more than a few wags who have referred to J Street as "Obama's Jews," in light of the fact that the president and some of his key advisors —including General Jones—have been suspected of being less than obedient toward the overall demands of Israel and its lobby.

Even Rahm Emanuel—the American-born Obama chief of staff whose father was one of the "founding terrorist fathers" of Israel and who, on his own, did a brief stint as a volunteer for the Israel military—was reportedly repeatedly denounced as a "self-hating Jew" by high-ranking Israeli government officials for lending his name and credibility (in the American Jewish community) to the initiatives of the Obama administration.

So what remains in play is the fact that Obama's loyal opposition—the Republican Party—is firmly in lockstep with the "mainstream" hardliners in AIPAC. And J Street is a road to nowhere.

Although the Democratic leadership in Washington has always been firmly in the camp of Israel, the GOP cemented its ties with AIPAC in particular (and the well-heeled fanatics who support that lobby) during the Ronald Reagan era.

At that time, traditional American nationalism went by the wayside as far as the GOP leadership was concerned. Reagan and the national Republican power brokers not only firmly aligned themselves with Israel, but also supported sovereignty-surrendering free trade internationalism and flagrantly opened up American borders to wave upon wave of illegal immigrants as never before.

The few elements of the Democratic Party in Washington that do dare to question all-out support for Israel— right or wrong—are largely isolated to increasingly smaller numbers in the Congressional Black Caucus and a few independent-minded folks like Rep. Dennis Kucinich (DOhio) and a handful of others, largely those who have substantial numbers of Arab-Americans in their congressional districts.

As far as the American Jewish community itself is concerned, polls taken both by J Street and the AIPAC-allied Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith during Israel's violent attack on Gaza—including the slaughter of helpless caged animals in the little Gaza zoo—reflected that roughly eight out of every ten American Jews admittedly supported Israel's Gaza venture (which most people around the world viewed as a horrific series of war crimes). And considering the fact that the Gaza rampage was particularly grotesque, the fact that so many American Jews openly supported it is revealing.

Thus, the hopes of a handful of good people who dreamed that J Street would somehow add an element of sanity, balance and common sense to the Middle East debate (to the extent that there is any "debate" at all) seems to be just that: a dream.

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Michael Collins Piper can be heard every week day night live on the Internet at republicbroadcasting.org. He is the author of ***Final Judgment***, the controversial "underground bestseller" documenting the collaboration of Israeli intelligence in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He is also the author of ***The High Priests of War***, ***The New Jerusalem: Zionist Power in America*** , ***The Judas Goats: The Enemy Within***, ***Dirty Secrets: Crime, Conspiracy & Cover-Up in the 20th Century***, ***The GOLEM: Israel's Hell Bomb***, and ***Target: Traficant.*** These works can be found at America First Books and First Amendment Books: 1-888-699-news. He has lectured on suppressed topics in places as diverse as Malaysia, Japan, Canada, Russia and Abu Dhabi.

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